

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to realize that there will be a lot of rhetoric about this. I know that I have heard the debate that what you get is more efficiency when you use higher-price labor, but the true effect is if you got more efficiency, those companies that used the \$28-an-hour workers would be able to bid on the job and get it without prevailing wage. If you actually save money by using higher price labor, then you could come in with lower bids, you would win the bid contract. So I think that you are going to hear some misinformation.

The other question is that if you do not set those wages high, that you are going to take advantage of people who are very poor. The truth is the people who are very poor, the people who have modest incomes, middle-income America, are going to subsidize with their tax dollars extraordinarily high pay rates for those people that work on the schools. It is not the workers who are talking advantage of on the schools, but all the other workers in our States and across this country that are going to pay higher taxes in order to get school projects they could get at a cheaper price.

Mr. BALLENGER. Suppose all the money they could save went into buying computers. This is capital outlay, the same deal. In other words, the money that they have to spend on higher construction costs could go into computers, all kinds of equipment that would make the school a better place.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. This is all about using the taxpayers' dollars more effectively.

Mr. BALLENGER. Right.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. My colleague from Colorado.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. I wanted to just give you one more example on this Davis-Bacon Act and what the impact is on public projects and construction projects.

I returned from a couple weeks in, over the Easter break, doing town meetings throughout eastern Colorado; I went to a town called Trinidad which is in the southern part of Colorado, and the mayor, a Democrat I might add, came to me, and he talked about the Davis-Bacon Act as the No. 1 problem they are facing in Trinidad, CO. And they want to repair their library there, repair the library, not replace it, just repair it. In the process of repairing their town library they accepted \$17,500 of Federal funds that they received in a rural redevelopment and construction grant, which was a small portion of the overall costs of this repair project. They concluded that by the time they calculated the cost of accepting \$17,000 of Federal funds, costs attributable directly to the Davis-Bacon Act, that they would have been better off to replace the entire building than to make the small repairs that they had in mind.

Now I ask you to think about that when President Clinton and the Demo-

crats come here and talk about this \$5 billion as though it somehow is going to help our children and help our schools, and I assure you it will not. Before we came here tonight, one of our friends on the other side of the aisle, Democrat side of the aisle, said would it not be trying to paint a bleak picture for our children, said would it not be a shame if the children and the teachers returned this fall to crumbling schools.

Let me ask a more direct question: Would it not be a shame if those children and teachers returned in the fall to crumbling schools that are still crumbling, even after spending \$5 billion of Federal funds? Our States, as a matter of fact, are better off unencumbered by Federal intrusion in the efforts of trying to repair schools and taking care of children. That is where our confidence ought to be placed, not here in Washington.

Mr. BALLENGER. We thank the kind gentleman. I would like to congratulate you on first of all your hearings throughout the country, but second of all, bringing this to, I hope, our TV audience to let them better understand what this is all about.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank my colleagues for participating tonight. We are going to continue this dialogue on education. It is a very important one. We are going to continue hearings. This President in many cases has the same vision of quality education for our children, the best educated kids in the world. We share that vision. I think where we separate and go down different paths is he believes the answer perhaps too often lies here in Washington where we believe the answer lies with parents, with teachers and a local classroom.

I thank my colleagues for being here tonight.

BIPARTISAN COOPERATION IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to applaud the fact that we have been discussing education now for more than 2 hours and that both parties have chosen to talk about education tonight. It is an indication of the kind of priority that we have set here in Washington on education, both parties.

As I said earlier this afternoon, we are in a situation now where something wonderful is going to happen in the 105th Congress as a result of the bipartisan cooperation, which I think is very sincere and very real. We have a problem, however, that there are people holding on to the past, the recent past, the past of the 104th Congress. They really understand that there is a new environment for the discussion of

education issues as a new political environment, and they discovered that political environment last year during the 104th Congress.

The Contract With America made an onslaught on Federal participation in education. The Contract With America came forward and proposed to eliminate, eradicate, the Department of Education. They proposed to cut school lunches, they proposed to cut Head Start, they proposed to cut Title I.

I do not want to dwell too much on that unfortunate, very uncomfortable situation of the 104th Congress, but it is important to set all discussion within the context of the great triumph accomplished by the common sense of the American people. The common sense of the voters triumphed over all of the proposals of the Republican majority for education, the proposals that would have rolled us backwards. They even proposed a total of cuts that would have amounted to about \$4 billion at the beginning of the 104th Congress. The Republican majority made those proposals and moved that way; it shut down the government. Let us not forget that the government was shut down because the President and the White House refused to go along with drastic extreme proposals for cuts in areas like education.

□ 1845

Let me just conclude this recapitulation of the 104th Congress by saying that I want to pay tribute to and give credit to those leaders in the Republican majority who decided to turn it all around. They did a 360 degree turn. They listened to the common sense being expressed by the American people. They listened to the voters. They listened.

They watched the polls which showed that the American voters ranked education as a high priority, and they have consistently been doing so for some time. They listened and at the last minute, faced with the possibility that their negative positions on education might very much impact on their reelection possibilities, they did a 360 degree turnaround. I applaud the fact that they were not so ideologically entrenched, so philosophically dogmatic that they could not make the turn. Given the necessity of getting re-elected, they decided to make the turn.

I applaud the fact that the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING], chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, who is a former school principal, teacher, school superintendent, been around a long time, been on the Committee on Education and the Workforce for a long time, he was there with his insight, his experience, his wisdom. So when the turnaround took place, the chairman can tell them where to intelligently make the changes.

The turnaround, which was a 360 degree turnaround, instead of cutting education by \$4 billion, they increased

education by \$4 billion, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING] helped to guide them in making those increases in Head Start, in title I, in Pell grants. You name it, the positive increases in education were made, and I applaud the majority for responding to the common sense of the American people.

Given the fact that the common sense of the American people has been discovered as a reality politically, we can expect no one in any leadership position in either party, certainly not in the Republican Party which saw the folly of their ways, to openly be against improvements in public education. They would not openly attack the effort to improve education.

What we can expect, though, and have to be prepared for, and it may very much slow down the effort, confuse the effort, is guerrilla warfare, ambushes, Trojan horses, people who pretend that they care about education coming into the walls, into the compound and sabotaging. People who say they care about education, but they think, or they propose that the Federal Government not get involved. Federal Government involvement is minuscule even at the height of involvement, even if we follow the President's proposals, and the President has made a extensive approach here. The President does propose that we not play around with education.

Mr. Speaker, this is a call for action for American education of the 21st century. It covers education from early childhood to lifelong learning, right through graduate school, Pell grants, and undergraduate school. It is comprehensive. It talks about construction, it talks about standards in the classroom, telecommunications. It is a comprehensive approach. Certainly President Clinton has earned the title of education President merely for making proposals.

It is for us, the Members of the legislature, the Members of Congress, the House and the Senate, to follow through on these proposals and not to sabotage them, not to confuse the situation with misinformation or disinformation such as some of which we have heard in the previous hour. There are people who say that we should not go forward with Federal involvement because the Federal Government has too many programs, seven hundred programs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am in favor of streamlining and improving Federal involvement in education, but I will not take the irrational position that the number of programs is somehow a barometer of whether the programs are effective or efficient. If we did that, we would shut down half of the Defense Department.

The Defense Department has far more than 700 programs or 700 weapons systems. If we look at the defense budget and really go through it, there is probably nothing in the world that in some manner is not in the defense

budget, where they do not approach some problem of human concern in the defense budget. They approach reading and counseling, a whole lot of other things other than weapons systems. And then they have numerous weapons systems, which if we were into the fallacy of measuring effectiveness and efficiency by numbers, we would say shut down some of these weapons systems, because automatically to have too many is to have an ineffective defense.

Mr. Speaker, that is an irrational approach. If we are going to streamline the way the Federal Government approaches education, let us not begin by making irrational proposals about the number is too great and therefore we should wage war on the numbers.

What has happened with that irrational approach is that small has become evil and big has been too big to contain. So a lot of small programs that were very meaningful and very efficient and effective were cut out, and big programs were left, just because the size was so great that the people who wanted to wage war on a number of programs did not bother to touch them.

Some small programs related to libraries, related to foreign language, literature and libraries, made a lot of sense. They had networks that cut across all the libraries of the country, and for a very tiny amount of money we were building up the inventory of books in foreign languages, which was significant. That was cut out, so small that it was deemed one of those programs, automatically, if they are that small and we have too many programs and numbers mean so much in view of education, then automatically let the small programs go. That is not a rational approach.

I hope as we go forward in the spirit of bipartisan cooperation we will cease using these kinds of irrational barometers and measurements and that we be honest about, let us evaluate each program, let us evaluate each approach on the basis of what works. The previous speakers talked about what works, what really works. Let us take that criteria and talk about what really works.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have a hearing I understand next week in New York City, and the discussion is about what works. That committee will have a discussion of a program proposed by the mayor of New York City. Mayor Giuliani has gone out to get parochial and private schools to accept children from public schools as a result of the overcrowding in public schools that took place, that was highlighted. It has been there for some time, but it was highlighted last fall when we had 91,000 children in New York City who did not have a place to sit in school on opening day. To what degree that exists right now, I cannot tell you. We have been trying to find out. And there is a wall of obscurity that has been deliberately promulgated which prevents us from really knowing, have they solved the

problem of overcrowding? Did they move children around to empty schools or schools that have less than capacity? How did they solve the problem of 91,000 children in school on opening day not having a place to sit? How did they solve the problem? We still do not know.

What we do know is the mayor took the initiative and said, I will find places for 1,000 children in parochial and private schools; I will raise the money from private sources.

So every day in the paper we have new articles about the 1,000 children, the fact that the corporations and the private sector have come forward and provided the tuition money, the fact that they have a lottery, the number of children that the parents have applied to put their children in the program, and the last count was close to 20,000. They have 1,000 slots. Close to 20,000 have applied, so they are going to have a computerized lottery system to select. All of this is very exciting, and I congratulate the mayor for doing something concrete about a problem.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to help place 1,000 youngsters. The only question that we have to ask is, what happens to the other 90,000? There are 90,000 youngsters that we still have not placed. The 1,000, we hope that they will find secure places in the parochial and private schools. And we want to express our thanks to the private entrepreneurs and various people who put up the money to pay the tuition. We want to congratulate the parents who were lucky in the lottery; 1,000 out of 20,000, and the number may still be drawn. I do not know when the cutoff point was. In that lottery, though, we will have 19,000 losers. But we congratulate and bless and wish the best of luck to those 1,000 who do go forward.

This is a good idea. Private industry, let us do more, let us place more children. Mr. Speaker, there are a few questions that we can ask to show that this is not the answer to the problem. New York City has 1 million students; 91,000 had no place to sit as of last September. How do we solve the problem? Do they have the capacity in the parochial schools to take all 90,000? I do not think so. Are we going to be able to raise the tuition for all 91,000? Is the private sector that generous? Are we going to get the money for 91,000? I do not think so.

I do not think that is the solution to the problem. The solution to the problem lies in a plan to rebuild and renovate and build new schools in New York City, the kind of plan that was proposed by the previous chancellor of the New York City school system. We do not have a superintendent; because we are so big, we have a chancellor. The chancellor presides over 32 community school districts in New York City.

The chancellor of the last system proposed a plan over, I think, 5 or 7 years to renovate, rebuild, build new schools. The present mayor ran him

out of town, ridiculed him and made all kinds of roadblocks. So, the man with the plan to take care of the problem was run out of town.

The solution now becomes, instead, placing children in private and parochial schools, and we are way behind if all we can do is place 1,000 of the 91,000.

So we have to be careful. In the present atmosphere, everybody wants to jump on the bandwagon. The voters have spoken. Education is a priority issue. The voters have awakened and they want to say: Well, Mr. Speaker, we spent the money necessary for defense, we spent the money to contain the evil empire, billions and billions. We went from a horse and buggy Defense Department after World War I to a multibillion-dollar Defense Department before the end of the Cold War.

We were spending money on a scale which is impossible almost for most voters to comprehend. Mr. Speaker, \$3.5 billion for an aircraft is beyond the comprehension of most people; \$2 billion for a submarine, beyond the comprehension. We take the cost of one submarine, and we can solve the problem of New York City for the next 20 years of buildings.

We can do a great deal with \$2 billion in terms of construction, renovation, taking care of asbestos problems in some schools, lead poisoning problems in some other schools, boilers that still burn coal. We have one-third of the city schools almost that still burn coal, polluting the environment and contributing to the high asthma rate in New York City. A large number of young people have asthma, larger than most big cities.

So be careful, beware. The Trojan horses are within the walls. They say that they are in favor of improving education; they say that they want to support the effort to revitalize and guarantee that every young person in America has a decent school, but the old attitudes that existed in the 104th Congress are still underneath the surface. There is an underground movement. There are guerrilla actions, there are ambushes that are going to take place, and we have to beware.

Let me just pause for a moment to talk about what it means to have a Nation committed to go forward in every way possible to improve our education system from the cradle to the grave.

□ 1900

We are creating a learning society. Before these were kind of loose terms thrown around, but we are really creating a learning society. President Clinton talks about a learning society, a lifelong learning society, where you learn from the time you are a baby all the way to the time you die.

This comprehensive approach dealing with adult literacy and adult education, the Call for Action for American Education, understands that that is the kind of society we want to create. As we go into the 21st century we ought to be able to spend less for de-

fense and less for weapons systems, and spend more to guarantee that there is a maximum opportunity for every person in America to be all that they can be. That is a sentimental, hokey slogan, you say, from the Armed Forces' public relations campaign, but it is pretty good. I will accept it.

Mr. Speaker, let us try to guarantee that the opportunity for every American will be there to be all that they can be, to strive for excellence in every way, starting with the kid who was in preschool, preschool age, through kindergarten, Head Start, right up to high school, college. Let us dedicate ourselves to the proposition that in this great country of ours, we are going to give every person an opportunity to be all they can be.

One part of this process ought to be to let us glamorize education and excellence more. Let us give more credits and more incentives to our students to be champions in the arena of education, in the arena of academics. We have a few national contests, the Westinghouse Science Contest and a few other well-known contests that reach out and embrace a small group of youngsters. We need more. We need to have academics elevated to the level of sports, so young people fulfill themselves and attain some kind of recognition among their peers and among adults by participating in activities which improve their minds.

A healthy body, of course, is a premium. We want to encourage healthy bodies. We still have a problem in America with people who do not exercise enough. We have a problem of obesity. Exhibition No. 1 is standing here. We do not want to denigrate sports, we do not want to denigrate physical activity, but we do want to exalt academic activity, intellectual activity.

I am here to pay tribute to a project, one of these 700-some projects in Federal education that was talked about before. I want to pay tribute to that for exalting the academic achievements of students. It is called "We the People * * * The Citizen and the Constitution." "We the People * * * The Citizen and the Constitution" is a national competition that is organized to encourage young people to learn more about our Constitution and our Government and how it works.

This was initiated, by the way, during the celebration of the centennial; not the centennial, the 20th anniversary of the bicentennial—the 200th anniversary of the Constitution. It was one of the activities initiated. Now it is continued by the Center for Civic Education.

The Center for Civic Education is part of the operation of one of our education centers funded by the Federal Government. I want to applaud them and congratulate them for this. They were not always involved. This started out as an ad hoc sort of thing just for the celebration of the Bicentennial. Now it has been institutionalized. I want to congratulate the Center for

Civic Education for carrying it forward.

They have now been doing this for quite a long time. I do not remember whether it is 10 years or more. Each year in each State, or first in each locality—I will use New York City as an example, New York City has a competition among the schools. Other areas of the State have competitions. The winners of those competitions go to some central place in the State and they compete for the State championship. This happens all over the country, in all 50 States. The State champions then are invited to Washington in the spring, and they compete among themselves for the national championship.

The competition is all about who knows the Constitution, the Government, and its operations the best. What they do here, let me just read some background. The top high schools or the winners in the country come here and they participate in national finals on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and more than 1,250 outstanding high school students from 50 States came this spring. There were 50 States and the District of Columbia to participate.

This has been going on for some time now. I think we have had the participation of something like 24 million students totally, at the local level as well as at the national level; in every locality, every State, they get a lot of participation.

This year, of course, they came on April 25 and 26, and after 2 days of intense examination of their knowledge of the Constitution the field was reduced from 51 teams to 10 teams, the top 10 teams. The first two rounds of competitive hearings were held April 26 and 27, at the J.W. Marriott Hotel here in Washington, and the combined scores of each team determined the 10 teams to compete Monday in the championship round on Capitol Hill. They were right here a few days ago, Monday, in this Capitol, in the Rayburn Building, competing for the final championship, 10 different teams.

In the competitions, students demonstrate their knowledge of the Constitution and Bill of Rights before simulated congressional committees composed of constitutional scholars, lawyers, journalists, and government leaders. Students compete as classes after completing a comprehensive course of study on the Constitution to qualify for the competition. The national finalists had won congressional district and State competitions in order to advance to this point. Then after the day's competition here on Capitol Hill they announced the winners last Monday night.

I want to pay tribute to the winners of the contest. First I will pay tribute to the top 10 schools. This is the kind of activity that you will not get on television. The championship games are broadcast for college and at the local levels you have championship games broadcast for high schools and sports.

Students who are good in sports always get attention. They get trophies, and there is a trophy case in every high school. We would like to replicate that and have academic and intellectual activities given the same status.

So I take my hat off, and I want to congratulate the top 10 schools in America. Lincoln High School in Portland, OR was one of those top 10; East Kent High School from Kentwood, MI; Clara Barton High School from Brooklyn, NY, in my own district; East High School, from Denver, CO; Castle High School from Newburgh, IN; Maine South High School from Park Ridge, IL; East Brunswick High School from East Brunswick, NJ; Tahoma High School from Kent, WA; Arcadia High School from Arcadia, CA; and Our Lady of Lourdes Academy from Miami, FL. These are the top 10 schools in the competition on "We the People * * * The Citizen and the Constitution," a competition designed to test the students' knowledge of both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

So I salute all of the top 10, and I would like to pay additional tribute to the top four. The top winner was Our Lady of Lourdes Academy, Miami, FL. They came in first this year, first place. The second winner was Arcadia High School from Arcadia, CA. Congratulations, Arcadia. Congratulations, Our Lady of Lourdes.

Then No. 3 was Tahoma High School of Kent, WA. Congratulations to Tahoma High School. No. 4 was Clara Barton High School of Brooklyn, NY, from the 11th Congressional District. I want to congratulate the members of the team from Clara Barton High School in my district in Brooklyn. My hat goes off to them. This is the second time they came in fourth in the contest. This is, I think, the sixth time that they have made it to the national finals as State champions, so something great is going on at Clara Barton High School.

I want to congratulate the students who participated. This was one of the largest classes. The rules require that the participants in this contest be a whole class, and that the class be under the instructor, the coach, for the whole year. So it is a class in social studies or history or some related matter that comes as a class.

What happened at Clara Barton High School this year is that because of their past reputation, because they had come and won fourth place before, because they had consistently won the State championships, the teacher, the coach who heads the class, was inundated with requests to get into his class. So we are talking about 40 students, one of the largest classes. It was the largest class to come to the contest, all 40 students.

New York City has an overcrowded situation, but high school teachers do not have to take 40 students. Mr. Casey, Leo Casey, was the teacher, Dr. Leo Casey. He agreed to take 40 students because of the overwhelming demand to get into his class.

These students have not been celebrated as sports heroes. They are not entertainment celebrities. But the tradition that has been established at Clara Barton High School is such that the winning tradition in the intellectual academic arena has led to students clamoring to get in. So Dr. Casey accepted 40 students, and those 40 students, that was the largest team here in Washington.

I want to read the names of the students. I am going to take the time to do it because I think this is part of the process of creating an environment in America where education is exalted, where academic and intellectual activities are raised to a new level, our students are inspired and given incentives to strive for excellence. These are students who strive for excellence in the area of understanding the Bill of Rights and the Constitution.

They are: Nicole Aljoe, Munira Basir, Letricia Bennett, Michelle Bennett, Katherine Bernard, Slahudin Bholai, Dafina Westbrook-Broadly, Keusha Carrington, Shakira Chang, Calvin Coleman, Dean Douglas, Nirva Dube, Iesha Etheridge, Jonathan Ewars, Migdalia Feliberty, Sean FORDE, Sharkara Godet, Oslen Grant, Moshesh Harris, Rochelin Herold, Christopher Hubbard, Sonia Hurble, Tiffany Jefferson, Generva John, Anthony Marin, Anisah Miley, Travis Moorer, Calistia Nanton, Franchelica Nunez, Damian O'Connor, Ayo Ogun, Emmanuel Onasile, Tamara Osbourne, Charlene Palmerm, Carolina Perez, Natalie Pierre, Raquel Rivera, Tanisha Simpson, Camille Sinclair, Vysaisha Singh, Vijay Sokedo, Sharon St. Hill, Karrien Stone, Naquida Taylor, and Andrea Telford.

These are all students, and I think the Members might have surmised from reading the names that they come from very diverse backgrounds. It was the most diverse team to appear at the national contest.

I might point out that in the 11th Congressional District, my congressional district, when the census was taken in 1990, 150,000 people listed themselves as being noncitizens, 150,000 out of a total 582,000. So I have one of the highest noncitizen populations of all the congressional districts. The 150,000 came forward and indicated they were not citizens, so they were legal immigrants. I assure the Members, the illegal immigrants did not come forward. So we have 150,000 of the 1990 legal immigrants.

The diversity of my district is reflected in the names of these children. My district has Cambodians, there are Chinese, there are Pakistani, there are a whole array of people from all of the islands of the Caribbean; we have Haitians. It is a wonderful mixture, a rainbow mixture of America in my district.

Generally, Mr. Speaker, there is an income level that is lower than average. Not all of these children are poor, but the great majority come from low-income homes who go to Clara Barton

High School. I want to congratulate them on their magnificent achievement.

I want to congratulate Mrs. Florence Smith, a former high school teacher, who served as the volunteer coordinator for my office. The 11th Congressional District coordinator is Florence Smith. By the way, she resigned, retired from school one year, and the next year she became the coordinator for my 11th Congressional District, and she has been there since then; about 8 years with Florence Smith, who does not receive a penny for her services.

If Members want to talk about volunteer services in harmony with the great conference that was held in Philadelphia this past weekend, here is an example of the kind of volunteers that we have in America. People who retire and who, in some cases, spend more time in activities after retirement than they did when they were working.

Congratulations to all the people who made it happen. In my congressional district, the Clara Barton High School team is sponsored not only by my office but by the Central Brooklyn Martin Luther King Commission. In fact, the money that was raised to first send this team to the capital at Albany was gathered by the Central Brooklyn Martin Luther King Commission. Money that has been raised in the past years before the funding level went up nationally to get them to Washington, the great sponsor and mentors of the Clara Barton High School team have been the members of the Central Brooklyn Martin Luther King commission.

□ 1915

We have some other organizations that have also become sponsors. Children's Times is a publication on education. Thomas Jones and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, have been very instrumental in encouraging the young people at Clara Barton High School and in raising money to make certain that they were able to go to Albany and come to Washington.

So it is a kind of growing group activity. They still have difficulties raising funds to get to Washington. I want to call on the bar associations of Brooklyn, the bar associations of Manhattan and New York, and all the lawyers who know what the Constitution is all about, judges' organizations, I would like to call on you.

Some judges come to practice with the youngsters. They come to my office on a Saturday morning about twice a year just before the contest and judges come and sit with them, go through the process and coach them in terms of how they handle tricky questions in the legal system related to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. So it is a group enterprise of great magnitude. I congratulate the winners, the champions from Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn.

It is one of those activities that we should see more of. The old-fashioned

spelling bees and the science fairs and a number of incentives to have children participate more in academic activities which develop their minds is an absolute necessity and must go forward.

Again, this is one of those 700-some Federal programs that have been ridiculed by the previous discussion. The Center for Civic Education does a great job. And I would not want it to arbitrarily be denied funding because it happens to be one of many programs. That is an irrational approach. That is an approach taken by people who really have not quite come around 100 percent to the understanding of the need for education to become America's No. 1 priority.

Our national security is all tied up with what we do with education. Our national security, certainly defense and our defense posture and our military services still have a great deal to do with national security. I am not denigrating that, but in a world which is more and more an economically competitive world, in a world where there is great competition for ideas, our No. 1 resource are our people and the education of those people must be our No. 1 agenda.

I congratulate the American voters. The American people understand that. They understood it long before the Members of Congress were willing to admit it, but now the Members of Congress have been forced by the insistence of the electorate to admit that education must be our No. 1 priority.

Political necessity has dictated it. What we have to worry about now is a people who are not sincere who, because of political necessity, they give lip service to their support for education. We have to worry about the Potemkin village effect. Does anybody know what a Potemkin village is?

There was a general named Potemkin in Russia who took Catherine the Great, who was his empress, on a tour to show her how magnificent a village that he was in charge of was; and in that village they had fronts. The houses were beautiful, but they had nothing behind them. They were all linked together. So Catherine the Great could not see behind them. And Potemkin's village was a beautiful village, but it was nothing but facades.

The danger is that there are some people that would want us to go to the American people with a Potemkin village in terms of educational improvement. They are satisfied to just get the headlines, make it appear that we have gone forward, but really not do the job.

It is a big job that we face. It is a big undertaking. And unless you are willing to follow the leadership of the President and take a comprehensive approach, comprehensive, a call for action for American education, this is a comprehensive approach. It starts with preschool education. It goes to Head Start.

Preschool education and Head Start have been given a great intellectual and philosophical boost by the recent

conference that was held at the White House on early childhood education and learning. Several magazines have run some articles on the brain of young children, how the brain develops.

It seems now that there are no detractors. And nobody opposes, nobody questions the theory now that the brain of a young child is the most valuable thing on Earth. It has potential that has seldom been tapped. They can learn so much more than we teach them. They can be developed in so many more constructive ways than we know. We should focus maximum attention on what happens to young children.

The brain is affected by how often they are squeezed, by how often they are cuddled. The brain is affected. The brain is affected by whether they are yelled at or whispered to. The brain is affected by the number of times their cries do not get a response. The brain is affected by the way you hold their hands and encourage them to grip the hand. It is affected by the way you move to help their eyesight develop. These are things that all the scientists agree on that great things happen to the brain just by the proper nurturing.

Recently we had scientists that affirm that this is happening positively. Recently we had several studies that show what happens if it is negative, if you do not take care of children when they are very young, what the results are.

The Romanian children that came from the Romanian orphanages have been cited several times in several studies from some of the Soviet and other Middle Eastern orphans. People saw these beautiful little children who had no mothers and fathers. They were being kept in pens and being thrown into big rooms where the adults only came around to feed them. And they were physically beautiful children and needing some help and attention in the hearts of many American parents who did not have children, and some who had children, who wanted to help so they added some of these children. They have gone and adopted children.

We had a heart-breaking example on television, I think, last night a news story about a family that adopted two Russian youngsters, fraternal twins, and what that family went through as a result of the damage that those young people had already suffered. You could not reverse it. Their brains had been affected in ways that could not be changed. So they are very anti-social. They have been ignored so long until they can form no attachments to human beings. They really are very suspicious, very hostile. They have things that they do that are incomprehensible.

The mother and the father tried for a long time. The father then died from pancreatic cancer, and now the mother just is overwhelmed. She cannot get help anywhere. She tried to place them in a residential school and found that the school saw them as being too difficult, they could not keep them.

It is not that she is not trying as hard as possible. It is an almost impossible task to raise such children in a normal situation, because the scientists have confirmed that your brain actually atrophies, it gets smaller, it dries up as a result of in childhood not being treated a certain way.

They have a study where they took some of these children from Romania, mainly Romanian, there is a thorough study done on the Romanian children, they took them through CAT scans and these various devices that can actually look at the brain and they showed the diagrams on television where the brain had shrunk and where it was irreversible. Certain parts of the brain shrinks, they cannot respond normally. They are damaged children.

On the other hand, there is a percentage that, no matter what happened to them, they survive, a small percentage. You might say the old argument that people often make, well, I went through poverty, I went through despair, but I came out all right. A certain percentage of the human race can be classified as almost super people; and no matter what group you are looking at, a certain percentage is going to overcome whatever conditions you put in front of them, a small percentage.

The overwhelming number of people respond to stimuli, and the brain is affected. So that nation which understands the importance of handling its young people with the maximum amount of nurturing and care; that is, the nation which first commits the most resources to young people, will certainly be in a position to not only save a lot of money later on in terms of the social dislocations that people who are damaged perpetuate, but in terms of the benefits of alive minds capable of learning, alive minds that have been expanded and they can absorb new information and new changes in technology very rapidly.

If you treat the minds of the young people a certain way, they have those kinds of minds and they have the mental and emotional attitudes, which are also constructive. Because people have always responded to them in a positive way, they respond to other people in a positive way. Their ability to work on teams, their ability to work and relate to their peers, all of this is affected.

We have concrete, scientific evidence which documents this. More important than genetic, the old debate of inheritance versus conditioning, environment versus the inheritance, that old debate can be put to rest. The inheritance does count. The genes you get do set up possibilities.

The greatest problem is in the way those genes are handled in the early years of life. You can take some weak genes and improve on them, actually, if children are nurtured a certain way and treated in a certain way. You can take some beautiful genes, strongest genes, and you can destroy them. They will atrophy, they will shrink, dry up

in terms of the brain, and you will have a set of behaviors that has nothing to do with the genetics that they inherit, the condition is there.

So what we put into Head Start, the dollars we spent for Head Start are the dollars we could get the greatest benefit from. If Head Start programs are going to degenerate and if we are going to put them on tight funding and say, yes, we subscribe to the principle that early childhood education ought to be supported, but we will not appropriate money so you can really have teachers who know, child-care specialists who know how to handle children and you just put them out there and you get welfare recipients, as has been proposed in some cities, you take people who are on welfare and you force them to go to work in child-care centers. Nothing could be worse than to have a person taking care of children who does not want to take care of them. Nothing could be worse than to have a person taking care of children who will be hostile to them because they feel they are being forced to do something they do not want to do.

So do not put people who are on welfare to work in child-care centers unless they want to go and receive training as to how to raise children, unless they are mothers already that have gone through the process already and understand how to nurture the children. And do not do it in a happenstance way so that maybe they know it, maybe they do not.

It pays to screen the people who are taking care of children in day-care offices and Head Start, anywhere else. Let us not try to solve our welfare jobs problem by using children as unfortunate guinea pigs. That is one lesson we ought to learn. Education funding for early childhood, education for Head Start should be adequate funding.

What is adequate funding? You can determine whether or not the ingredients are there by looking at the situation and setting up a set of rules that either the place is safe or it is not safe. The day-care center or the Head Start center, either the place is conducive to learning, with enough light, enough air, or it is not. There are standards that can determine what is adequate.

When it comes to personnel, you can determine whether the person has experience, training and they are able to deal with the job that they are assigned to do with respect to children. The dietician in the kitchen, they can determine whether they really know what they are doing, are they going to put too much salt in the food. All these things are doable. We can do them, but we have to have adequate funding to guarantee that they get done.

What I am saying is that the Potemkin village approach to say we are for education, we are for early childhood education, but say what is too much money, Head Start should not spend too much money, what is so much money? Let us determine what is adequate.

Which brings me to my final discussion for today. If you have bipartisan cooperation here in the House and they really want to go forward to improve education in America, then there is a set of standards which must be reexamined. I invite the voters, the citizens who are listening, to apply their common sense.

I spoke to a group in Cleveland called PS-21, a group of people who are dedicated to the proposition they want to have the most improved schools in University Heights, Cleveland Heights, they want to have the best possible schools. One of the ways that they are trying to accomplish this is to make sure that local citizens, leaders, teachers, people concerned about education and parents have a maximum discussion of what it takes to make good schools.

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A series of forums that they have had last year and this year, they are going to go all the way to the year 2000 because they are getting ready, they are remodeling their schools to be the best possible schools as they go into the 21 century. So that is why they call it PS 21.

We had a good discussion, and I talked to them about the micro level, at the citizens level, out there in the schools, the PTA's, people on the firing line, teachers. We have to have this kind of dialoguing to make certain we get the maximum benefits from what is happening at the macro level. The macro level is what President Clinton is proposing. The macro level are Federal programs. Macro level is what Congress will do when it acts on President Clinton's proposal.

The macro level involves such things as the vote that is going to be taken next week on the discount to schools for telecommunications services. The Federal Communications Commission acting on a mandate given to them by Congress will vote on a proposal to provide telecommunications services to schools and libraries across the country at a discount rate of between 20 percent and 90 percent. The poorest schools will get up to 90 percent discount on telecommunications services, and any school in the merit system will get at least a 20 percent discount on telecommunications services.

And by telecommunication services, I mean a whole range of things, including telephones. Most of our schools in New York do not have but a few telephones because they are charged the business rate for telephones. If telephones are put into this universal fund for telecommunications that is now going to be voted on by the FCC, then we will at least have more telephones in schools. But online services for computers, computer hardware, the wiring of the school, all of these things can be paid for at this discount rate that the telecommunications industries will have to pay for.

They have a fund called a universal fund that the money goes into, and at

this point it is a \$2.5 billion fund per year, \$2.5 billion per year indefinitely. It is not a short-term proposition. So this is a macro activity we ought to all understand, to relate to this macro activity. At the local level you have to have schools that can be wired.

If a school has an asbestos problem in New York, you cannot even get to the first step and take advantage of the universal fund that is going to be established by the Federal Communications Commission. We had Net Day across the country, various States, localities. We have Net Day. We had another Net Day episode in New York last week, and on Net Day volunteers go to help wire schools. For Net Day, the standard is that you should wire five classrooms and the school library, and you have completed a Net Day responsibility.

Well, Net Day in New York has been a gross failure. You have 1,000 schools and only a handful have been wired because the asbestos problem is there. You cannot bore holes and confront the fact that there is asbestos that must be taken care of. So at the micro level, unless we find a way to solve the problem of asbestos, we will not be able to take advantage of the macro programs. We will not be able to get part of that universal fund.

The President has proposed and we have in effect the literacy challenge fund. We have the technology learning grant program. These are already under way. We cannot take advantage of those in the schools that do not have the initiative to deal with the local problems that allow them to link up with these problems. That is why it becomes so important to deal with construction before you deal with anything else.

They cannot go into the 21st century and take advantage of the educational technology that is being developed. Computerized learning, videos, all kinds of things are being developed to supplement the teacher in the classroom. There is no substitute for the teacher in the classroom, by the way. Recent studies have shown that no matter what you do, the quality of the teacher in the classroom determines whether or not children will get an adequate education or superior education.

So the quality of the teacher we have to take as one of the constants. But around that they can have their performance enhanced. Teachers can do so much better no matter what kind of teacher they are if they have enhancement and can use the Internet, the videos, the educational television, computerized learning. All that is available and we should make a maximum opportunity to use it.

Mr. Speaker, we need what we call opportunity-to-learn standards in our great discussion of how to improve education in America. We need to focus on opportunity-to-learn standards. We know about the standards for curriculums. The President has pushed that and I agree with curriculum standards.

We know about testing standards where we are going to have tests that are similar enough from one State to another to be able to compare the performance of States, schools within States and performance of States with each other, and have some idea of what is happening in America overall with respect to adequate and excellent education. What the set of standards that we have not agreed on, we did agree on, and it was reversed. And the great horror story of the 104th Congress, they turned around everything except one, in one area they went backwards at a rapid rate.

We had opportunity-to-learn standards written into the legislation. The Goals 2000 Educate America Act had three sets of standards. They are the curriculum standards. They had the testing standards. And through a long debate, we members of the Education Committee had gotten the opportunity-to-learn standards.

Opportunity-to-learn standards are exactly what they say. If you are going to have a curriculum that is a great curriculum, if you are going to have testing, you are testing the children to see if they measure up and can learn that curriculum, one thing else has to happen. You have to have a guarantee that the students have an opportunity to learn by seeing to it that they have the right books so that they can measure up to the standards, pass tests, guarantee that they have a safe place to study, a safe place to learn.

That is part of the opportunity to learn. Guarantee that they have qualified teachers, people who know what they are doing. At one point we had a survey in New York City and found that two-thirds of the teachers who were teaching math and science in public schools in New York City had not majored in math and science in college. In junior high school, if you have teachers teaching math and science who did not major in science in college, you have a problem. Opportunity-to-learn standards would say that the standard is that no State, no locality should permit a situation where children do not have an opportunity to learn because the teachers are not qualified.

Opportunity to learn means that, if you are going to teach science, the school ought to have a science laboratory. It means that the science laboratory ought to have adequate supplies. Opportunity to learn means that you have books in the library which enhance the textbooks which are not 30 years old.

We have a problem with history books, social studies books being 30 years old in some of the libraries in New York City. So opportunity to learn and the agreement to accept opportunity-to-learn standards is one of those barometers by which we can measure whether people are sincere about improving education in America. One of those barometers to flesh out the Trojan horses and the underground

operatives and the people trying to ambush the effort is to ask them, how do you feel about opportunity to learn?

One of the first tests of opportunity-to-learn standards is, will you support the President's construction initiatives because at least every child should be in a building that is safe, in a building that is warm. In a building that does not burn coal and put pollutants in the air for children to breathe to get contaminated with all kinds of harmful substances. A building that is safe, a building that has decent lighting, a building that has decent ventilation, a building that is adequate so that you do not have what is happening in New York City. Again, schools will tell you because the board of education and the bureaucrats have told them that they do not have an overcrowding problem. We had a little test, the Central Brooklyn Martin Luther King Commission, which is my advisory committee on education, they sent people to school to see if they have solved their overcrowding problem.

Principals said, we have no problem, slightly over capacity. They were lying. The next question I told them to ask was, how many lunch periods do you have? How many lunch periods do you have? That is a telltale sign of an overcrowded school. We have numerous schools that have three lunch periods. Children start eating at 10:30. They do not stop until 2:30.

We have discovered one school that has five lunch periods. I said, if you have five lunch periods, when does the first group eat lunch? At 9:45. Is it not child abuse to make a child eat lunch at 9:45? Is there not something wrong nutritionally, physiologically with making a child eat lunch at 9:45 in the morning?

The principal who told me this has been living with it so long she was not embarrassed. She said, we let them have a snack later on if they get hungry. The last group that eats, we let them have a snack in the morning because they get hungry before we finally get to them. Five lunch periods, from 9:45 up to nearly 2, they are eating in relay teams. It is overcrowded. The capacity has been exceeded.

You should not do that to children. No matter what they do to lie about the statistics and tell us, once we asked the question, how many lunch periods do you have, we have a telltale sign it is overcrowded.

We can go around and see with our own eyes that children have classes in storerooms, sometimes in the hallway, two or three classes are in the auditorium. We can see that the overcrowding is there, even when the bureaucrats do not admit it.

We still have the problem, 91,000 children did not have a seat in New York City when school started last fall, and large numbers still do not have seats and nobody is willing to admit it. So opportunity to learn means that the construction initiative of President Clinton should go forward because at

schools like the schools in New York and the schools in numerous other cities that are overcrowded, that do have unsafe environments, lead poisoning, asbestos, all kinds of problems which affect the health of children. Those schools are transformed into the best schools that America can make.

The President is only proposing a small program that will set off the process, stimulate the State to put in money, stimulate the localities to spend money. And we must understand that. The great emergency for opportunity to learn is the construction of school buildings in our inner cities.

The \$5 billion fund that the President is proposing should be given. The first proportion that they are proposing, up to 50 percent, I understand there were a lot of objections from Members of Congress. Members of Congress, I plead to them to open their eyes and look at the evidence.

The greatest problem is now in the inner-city communities. Children do not have an opportunity to learn because they are denied the basics of a decent place to sit, a safe place to sit, and a place free of toxic substances and a place which is ventilated properly and lighted properly. It is that basic.

Opportunity to learn means much more. But let us at least start with the President's construction initiative. We will follow through. The President is proposing training for teachers, suppliers. The President is proposing a number of items that become very important.

The incentive of having young people in elementary, secondary schools know that they can go to college, if they apply themselves to their studies in elementary and secondary school, that is also important. It is a continuum from early childhood, from the cradle and how you handle a baby when you pick them up and nurture them all the way to lifelong learning of retired people who can still contribute to the society by volunteering, by helping to mentor, by trying to improve our society in a number of ways.

In the process, we should also make certain that we build into our popular culture, build into our popular culture incentives that glamorize academic activities, that glamorize intellectual activities.

I will close by saluting the Clara Barton High School championship team from my district for their performance in the contest to show their knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. I congratulate all the schools and all the youngsters across America who are champions in the area of intellectual and academic activities.

ISSUES FACING THE 105TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 60 minutes.